**CT6018**

**Indie Game Development**

**Module Outline**

2014/15

Semester 1

**Contains:**

Module Evaluation Summary

Module Content

Module Programme

Recommended Reading

Assessment Brief(s)

Course Blog Address – <http://ct.glos.ac.uk/ct6018>

Module Tutor: Zayd Junglee – [zjunglee@glos.ac.uk](mailto:zjunglee@glos.ac.uk)

Faculty of Media, Arts and Technology

School of Computing and Technology

**www.glos.ac.uk**

##### **MODULE EVALUATION SUMMARY**

##### **EVALUATION FOR THE CURRENT YEAR**

In this current academic year 2014/15 you will be given the opportunity to undertake module evaluation which will feed into the course board of studies meeting and will inform module design for the following year. This will be conducted centrally via Moodle. In addition a mid-module evaluation will take place in December.

**MODULE CONTENT**

**SUMMARY OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES**

Lectures take place on Wednesdays from 14:15 to 15:15 in LC207.

Practical sessions take place on Wednesdays from 15:15 to 16:15 in LC207.

The module will be delivered via a 1 hour lecture which will be followed by a 1 hour lab session. You are required to undertake at least **8 hours of independent study per week**. The tutors will provide help and support during the timetabled lab sessions.

There is one assessment for this module weighted at **100%**. Students need to attain an average of 40% across both assessments to pass the module.

**FEEDBACK FROM TUTORS**

All students are entitled to both formative and summative feedback during the module. Formative feedback is designed to enable you to improve your work/performance and takes many forms. Students will have several opportunities to receive feedback on their progress, e.g. during lab sessions, tutorials or seminars; as part of general feedback in lectures; and where appropriate, one to one sessions with their Academic Review Tutors. Summative feedback is received when your submitted coursework has been marked. As a minimum this will comprise constructive comments from the tutor and a final grade.

NB: work in CT modules requires a multi-disciplinary approach using complex software that is time consuming to learn. **You are advised not to leave assignments to the last minute.**

**MODULE AIMS**

This module explores the necessary steps for starting out in the games industry, as an indie developer, freelancer, small business or as a contract worker.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

1. Research and critically assess a specific area of the current games industry and a specific job market,
2. Understand when legal or business advice should be sought and how this impacts upon the design process,
3. Design a business plan to start up an independent company,
4. Evaluate recent games marketing strategy,
5. Design a marketing strategy for an independent game to a specified budget,
6. Comprehend the process for deploying a mobile game to the market place.

**PDP STATEMENT**

By the end of the module, you should achieve a high level of understanding of where you would like to work in the games industry, and how you can reach your career goals. It will explore legal and contractual issues that you are likely to encounter, assist in planning to work for yourself, learn when legal and business advice should be sought, where to find that advice and discuss marketing strategies adopted within the games industry.

##### **MODULE PROGRAMME** Wednesdays, 14:15-16:15, LC207

**Semester 1**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Week** | **Date** | **Lecture** | **Suggested practical work** |
| 1 | 01-Oct-14 | Introduction to indie game development, prototyping games, research indie gamers | Indie game physical prototype and translate to digital, signing up to Student Portfolios |
| 2 | 08-Oct-14 | What is required of you to be an indie game developer? | Discussion of existing indie game developers |
| 3 | 15-Oct-14 | Serious gaming | Choose a game type |
| 4 | 22-Oct-14 | Business models for games, monetisation of games | Establish your business model, set up metrics, continue development of prototype |
| 5 | 29-Oct-14 | Creating a business plan | Set up your company business plan |
|  | 03-Nov-14 | Mid-Semester Review | |
| 6 | 12-Nov-14 | Formative feedback – present and review indie game development progress to class | **Prototype game version 1 complete** |
| 7 | 19-Nov-14 | Marketing independent games e.g. Kickstarter, DoPressKit | Use Facebook and Twitter to get attention, Google Analytics |
| 8 | 26-Nov-14 | Game advertisement | Create various media to advertise game, e.g. banners, print materials |
| 9 | 03-Dec-14 | Contracts and legal issue | Outline a contract for your business |
| 10 | 10-Dec-14 | Understanding the gaming industry, releasing your game, target audience | Explore and targeting specific platforms e.g. iOS, Android, Steam Greenlight, PSN, XBOX Live |
|  | 15-Dec-14 | Christmas Break | |
|  | 22-Dec-14 | Christmas Break | |
|  | 29-Dec-14 | Christmas Break | |
| 11 | 07-Jan-15 | Applying for jobs in the games industry | How to sell yourself and your game ideas |
| 12 | 14-Jan-15 | Finalising indie game, review indie game development progress | Complete prototype game and supporting documentation to high quality |
|  | 19-Jan-15 | Inter-semester break | |

**RECOMMENDED READING**

#### Suggested Text ( \* denotes Hardcopy also available )

**Indie Books**

Brathwaite, B. (2012) *Breaking into the game industry: advice for a successful career from those who have done it*. Boston, Mass.: Course Technology Cengage Learning. From <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9781435458055>

Egenfeldt-Nielsen, S. (2013) *Understanding video games: the essential introduction* (2nd Edition). New York: Routledge. From <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780203116777> \*

Fullerton, R. (2009) *Game design workshop: a playcentric approach to creating innovative games*. London: Morgan Kaufmann. From <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780080560397>

Kaitila, C. (2012) T*he Game Jam survival guide: build a game in one crazy weekend and survive to tell the tale!*. Birmingham: Packt. From <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9781849692519>

Luppa N., & Borst, T. (2010) *End-To-End Game Development: Creating Independent Serious Games and Simulations from Start to Finish*. London: Focal. From <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780080952246>

Michael, D. & Sande, C. (2006) *Serious games: games that educate, train, and inform*. Boston, MA: Thomson Course Technology.

Ramsay, M. (2012) *Gamers at work: stories behind the games people play*. New York: Apress. From <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9781430233527>

Rogers, S. (2010) *Level up!: the guide to great video game design*. Chichester: Wiley. From <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9780470688809> \*

Seif El-Nasr, M., Drachen, A. & Canossa, C. (2013) *Game Analytics*. London: Springer. From <https://www.dawsonera.com/abstract/9781447147695>

**Indie Web Sites**

BritishIndie.com (2014) *British Indie Game Development News.* Retrieved 22 July 2014, from <http://britishindie.com/>

digital-tutors (2014) *Creating a Successful Indie Game.* Retrieved 22 July 2014, from <http://blog.digitaltutors.com/creating-successful-indie-game-10-tips-get-project-started-right-track/>

IndieDB (2014) *Rockin’ Indie Games one pixel at a time.* Retrieved 21 July 2014, from <http://www.indiedb.com>

GameCareerGuide (2014) *Main – GameCareerGuide.com.* Retrieved 21 July 2014, from <http://www.gamecareerguide.com/>

GDC Vault (2014) *GDC Vault, Preview & News.* Retrieved 22 July 2014, from <http://www.gdcvault.com/gdmag>

IGM (2014) *Indie Game Magazine | Indie Game Review, Preview & News.* Retrieved 22 July 2014, from <http://indiegamemag.com/>

Indie Fund (2010) *Indie Fund*. Retrieved 21 July 2014, from <http://www.indie-fund.com>

PixelProspector.com (2014a) *Indie Resources | PixelProspector – the indie gold mine.* Retrieved 22 July 2014, <http://www.pixelprospector.com/indie-resources/>

PixelProspector.com (2014b) *The Big List of Indie Game Business | PixelProspector – the indie gold mine.* Retrieved 22 July 2014, from <http://www.pixelprospector.com/the-big-list-of-indie-game-business/>

#### Other Resources

The module will be supported by a Moodle web site. This site contains tutorial information, lecture notes, reading list and showcase material. Moodle web site can be accessed at: <http://moodle.glos.ac.uk/>.

A range of hardware including HD Digital Cameras, HD Camcorders, Microphones, Blue / Green Screen, and Tripods are available from the Media School’s Loan Equipment office. The office is located between reception and the refectory. You will need your University card in order to enter this building.

**Important:** You can only book equipment using the Media School Booking System web site (available <http://mediaschoolbookings.glos.ac.uk>). Upon placing a booking, you must have it confirmed by one of the tutors before picking up the equipment. To do this, you must forward the Media School Booking Request email received in your student email account to one of the tutors on the module. Wait for a reply from the tutor to acknowledge that the booking request has been confirmed. Once confirmed, you may head to the Media School’s Loan Equipment office to pick up the equipment.

**ASSESSMENT BRIEF 1**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1. Module code  and title** | **CT6018 Indie Game Development** |
| **2. Module tutor** | Zayd Junglee |
| **3. Tutor with responsibility for this Assessment** | Zayd Junglee  This is your first point of contact. |
| **4. Assignment** | 001: 100% Coursework: Individual, indie game prototype, 10-page business and marketing plan, development process. (2000 words or equivalent).  You will be penalised according to the **Academic Regulations for Taught Provision** if you exceed the size limit. |
| **5. Submission deadline**  . | ***Wednesday 14th January 2015***  Your attention is drawn to the penalties for late submission; **see Academic Regulations for Taught Provision.** |
| **6. Arrangements for submission** | **Park Assignment Room** |
| **7. Date and location for return of work** | **Written feedback and provisional mark will be within 20 working days of submission** |
| **8. Students with Disabilities** | Alternative assessment arrangements may be made, where appropriate, for disabled students. However, these will only be implemented upon the advice of the Disability Advisor. Disabled students wishing to be considered for alternative assessment arrangements must give notification of the disability (with evidence) to the Disability Advisor by the published deadlines. |
| **9. University Regulations for Assessment** | All assessments are subject to the **Academic Regulations for Taught Provision**. These include regulations relating to Errors of Attribution and Assessment Offences. In exercising their judgement, Examiners may penalise any work here the standard of English, numeracy or presentation adversely affects the quality of the work, or where the work submitted exceeds the published size or time limits, or where the work fails to follow normal academic conventions for acknowledging sources. |

**10. The requirements for Assessment Brief 1**

***Part 1: Indie game prototype (50%)***

You are required to build a prototype game for mobile, using a game development environment of your choice. There must be at least **one core game mechanic** and an example of (simulating) an **in-app purchase** (i.e. for monetisation), to entice the player to buy into more features of / progressing through the game. You are encouraged to maintain a high quality level of coding practice, i.e. well-structured files and commented code, as well as high quality designed artwork. By the end of the assignment you should demonstrate your game has been deployed to a mobile app. store, e.g. Google Play or Apple App Store.

**You are required to have version one of your prototype game ready to present to the rest of the class by week 6.**

It is recommended that you undertake an iterative development process of your prototype game, ensuring that each week you publish an updated version of your prototype game, with screenshots and a change log. To help you with this, sign up for your own Student Portfolio space at [http://ct.glos.ac.uk](http://ct.glos.ac.uk/). Once signed in, you must publish weekly progress of your indie development (a minimum of 12 posts by the end of the assignment). You are encouraged to add comments and form discussions with your peers’ posts, obtaining formative feedback on areas which are good as well as areas which could be improved.

You must not use the Student Portfolio web site to share code snippets. If you find code to answer a problem in a post, post a link to the code e.g. from stackoverflow.com or create pastebin.com shortcuts. Deviating from these rules may lead to plagiarism.

***Part 2: Supporting documentation (50%) – The 10-page business and marketing plan***

You are required to devise a 10-page business plan, with a starting budget of £100k. You should outline the key components for what is necessary to become a successful indie game developer. This could include (but not limited to) sections such as an executive summary, the registered business / company, product description, target audience, competitive survey, marketing plan, organisation structure, risk assessment, financial requirements and a cash flow forecast. It is also important to address contracts and legal implications in setting yourself up as an indie game developer.

You must choose an appropriate business model to help channel your indie game idea to be successful. The bulk of your business plan is to ensure you devise a suitable strategy to market your game. To facilitate this, consider expanding your business plan by using various online marketing methods such as social media (Facebook and Twitter), presskit(), competitions, crowdsourcing (e.g. Kickstarter or Indiegogo), alphafunding or submitting to various indie game databases and forums.

Although there will be lectures exploring topics related to indie game development, they will not take you through the material to absolute completion. By taking on the role of an indie game developer, **it is your responsibility to be proactive in the development and promotion of your game.** The 10-page business plan is designed to guide you and to demonstrate your ability to market your game in a short period of time. The 10-page business and marketing plan must be supported with appropriate rationale and include a list of references formatted according to the Harvard system.

As part of this module, the whole class will be given the opportunity to participate in a Facebook Indie Community Group to help form discussions and promote your progress.

**The supporting documentation, including attendance and engagement in lectures, are important parts of the overall process and forms part of the assessment criteria.**

**11. Assessment Brief 1 Criteria**

The grade table on the following page is a guide to the level of practical content required for the assignments. You need to achieve at least 40% to pass this assessment.

*Assesses all learning outcomes*

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Grade** | **Content** |
| To achieve <30 | Some requirements met, but very limited and not recoverable. Copyright violation. No comments in any code. |
| To achieve <40 | Deliverables partially complete, e.g. not all components attempted. No game mechanics. Scripting patterns inconsistent. Poor quality comments in code. Limited weekly progress report. Limited supporting documentation. No references. |
| To achieve 40+ | All components attempted. At least one core game mechanic. Simulated example of in-app purchase. Basic artwork / placeholder graphics. Some comments in code. Some evidence of weekly progress report. Presented first prototype on time. Supporting documentation submitted, with references. |
| To achieve 50+ | All components functional. Good core game mechanic with evidence of progression. Suitable file and code structure. A range of examples of in-app purchases. Good comments in code. Good quality artwork. Clear progress report. Evaluation contains evidence of criteria. Detailed business plan. |
| To achieve 60+ | Original and intuitive ideas. Engaging, addictive and innovative gameplay. Very good game mechanics complemented with excellent artwork. Clear evidence of progress, showing evidence of problem-solving along the way. Clear comments indicating understanding of code. Evidence of clear strategy for marketing game in business plan. |
| To achieve 70+ | Excellent progress reports and completed product. High quality, aesthetically pleasing, interactive interface / game design. Explored and integrated additional APIs. Included suggestions for further work including a range of marketing tools. Excellent level of commenting ready for auto-documentation. Business plan concise. |

The assignment will be graded using the School of Computing & Technology Assessment Criteria Grid.

**12. Special Instructions**

The following technical constraints must be adhered to:

***Part 1: Indie game prototype (50%)***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| File type | : | Executable + Full Source Code (well organised!) |
| Delivery method | : | USB / DVD |
| Copyright | : | All source material must be copyright free |

***Part 2: Supporting documentation (50%) – The 10-page business and marketing plan***

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| File type | : | Word Document |
| File size | : | < 5 mb |
| Delivery method | : | USB / DVD |

**Submitting assignment**

The final submission must include a well organised folder structure on the USB / DVD with:

1. 1 x cover sheet in PDF format
2. 1 x Indie game prototype
3. 1 x Supporting documentation - the 10-page business and marketing plan in Word Document format

Note: Your project must have a suitable folder structure with all files including the source. All files should be sensibly named. It is recommended to adopt a lowercase filename convention and use hyphens to concatenate multiple words, e.g. s1234567-business-marketing-plan.docx

Write your student numbers on the USB / DVD and use a PolyFile with a disc pocket so that your work does not get lost!



**Notes on referencing**

Careful referencing of sources is vital when making use of the work of others. You are expected to employ the referencing conventions recommended in the Course. These conventions apply to information taken from internet sources, as well as books, journals and lectures. If you are unsure of the way to reference properly, seek advice from a member of staff before you submit the assessment.

These are some of the points you should check before submitting your work:

* are all direct quotations, from both primary and secondary sources, suitably acknowledged (placed in quotation marks or indented)?
* have you provided full details of the source of the quotation, according to the referencing convention used in the Course?
* have you acknowledged the source of ideas not your own, even if you are not quoting directly from the source?
* have you avoided close paraphrase from sources? (Check that you are not presenting other people’s words or phrasing as if they are your own.)
* if you have worked closely with others in preparing for this assessment, is the material you are presenting sufficiently your own?

A Harvard referencing tutorial can be found at: <http://ist.glos.ac.uk/referencing/harvard/>

The tutorial should take approximately 20 minutes to work through and includes lots of examples of different types of resources. It is based on the “Cite them right” book (Richard Pears and Graham Shields (2008). *Cite them right: the essential referencing guide*. Newcastle upon Tyne, Pear Tree Books.) available on Amazon and copies in the Library.

More details about referencing, including a quick referencing guide and a tutorial about plagiarism, details of how to reference sources such as websites, online journals, newspaper articles, and official publications, are available at:

<http://insight.glos.ac.uk/departments/lis/resources/Pages/referencing.aspx>

**If you are unsure of the way to reference properly, seek advice from a member of staff before you submit the assessment.** In submitting your work for assessment you are making a statement that it is your own work, it has not been submitted for any other assessment, and it does not infringe the ethical principles set out in the University’s **Research Ethics: Principles and Procedures.**